

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE GRADE OF THEORICUS, 2 = 9



THEORICUS IS THE SECOND GRADE of the Rosicrucian Order. The aspirant advances into it through the thirty-second path of the letter Tav, explained at the end of the preceding chapter. As its name implies, the Grade of Theoricus is that in which one learns the underlying theory that will be applied in subsequent practice.

It is attributed to the ninth Sephirah, *Yesod*, the Foundation or Basis. In Qabalistic psychology, *Yesod* is the sphere of the automatic consciousness, or subconscious mind. Nearly every detail of the work of the Grade of Theoricus has to do with the occult theory of the operation of the forces of subconsciousness.

Symbolically, *Yesod* is said to represent the generative organs of the archetypal man. This symbology is based on the fact that it is through the agency of what we now term subconsciousness that the Life Power continually reproduces itself in a series of living forms.

In Qabalistic writings the mode of consciousness attributed to *Yesod* is thus described: "The ninth path is called the Purified Intelligence. It purifies the emanations, prevents the fracture and corrects the design of their images, for it establishes their unity to preserve them from destruction and division by their union with itself."

In Hebrew, "purified" is THVR, *Tahoor*, which adds up to 220, like the initials C.R., who is the Foundation of the Invisible Order. As *Yesod*, the Purified Intelligence, is the basis of the cosmic order, so is C.R., also a type of purified consciousness, the foundation of the Fraternity. Furthermore, 220 is the numeration of the letters R.C., which stand for tenderness and compassion. Similarly, when consciousness is purified, its quality is distinguished by this noun *compassion*. Hence, we have here also a hint that the fundamental nature of things is itself marked by that same quality.

## DOCTRINES OF THE GRADE

The letters of THVR give the four doctrines of the Grade. They correspond to the following Tarot sequence: Strength, Key 8 (T); The Emperor, Key 4 (H); The Hierophant, Key 5 (V); The Sun, Key 19 (R). The four doctrines are as follows:



### 1. STRENGTH Key 8 (T)

Whatever exists is a form of spiritual energy. Every form of spiritual energy is subject to the control and direction of the form above it. The conscious imagery of Man is a form of spiritual energy. All forms of energy below this level are subject its control. It, in turn, is subject to the direction of superconscious levels of energy. These flow down into subconscious levels through the agency of the conscious mind of Man, which is the mediator between that which is above and that which is below.

The various distinctions between "causal," "mental," "astral," and "physical" are merely for the sake of convenience in classification. It is wholly erroneous to speak of material forces as being opposed to spiritual ones. On the contrary, as science abundantly proves, there is no separate entity called "matter." "Matter" is merely the way spiritual energy behaves within the range of the human senses and of the instruments man has invented to supplement those senses. This doctrine of the essential spirituality of all activities whatsoever is fundamental in Rosicrucian philosophy, as it is fundamental in the Qabalah.

It is the logical consequence of the doctrine of Hermes that all things are from One. Sometimes it is objected that this doctrine materializes spiritual things. On the contrary, it spiritualizes all things. So long as we continue to think of matter as being real, as having an independent existence and forces of its own, so long are we in danger from the limiting consequences of that error.

Yet the truth that opposes the error does not consist in saying that physical forms and forces have no actual existence. The liberating truth is that physical forces, and all other forces, are essentially spiritual, because their root is the Divine Life behind all things.

Our bodies and houses are spiritual facts. The solid earth is another spiritual fact. So are the sun, moon, and stars. When this is understood, the greatest barrier to success in practical occultism has been removed.

So long as we suppose spiritual forces to be antagonized by material forces, we never can be sure of anything; for it is perfectly evident that we do not understand the full extent of the physical world and its laws and forces. If we suppose this to be our adversary, we are defeated before we begin to fight, because we cannot possibly expect to overcome an adversary that is immeasurably greater in resources than ourselves. But if we see that what *seems* to be an adversary is really a manifestation of the very same order that is the basis of our own existence, if we grasp the truth that all forces are spiritual, if we see that the law of our own lives is the law of the universe, then we perceive that the only adversary is our own want of knowledge of the inner and single spiritual Reality. We may then begin our work with a reasonable prospect of success, because we approach it in the right mood.

The doctrine taught the Theoricus, however, says more than that all forces are essentially spiritual. In the symbolic language of Key 8 it declares that all the forces of the cosmos are under the control of the attentive, watchful, vigilant self-consciousness of man. It shows human subconsciousness as the mistress of the king of beasts, thus implying that modifications of the human levels of subconsciousness are transferable to the animal kingdom. It further intimates that the reign of subconsciousness extends itself to the vegetable kingdom, by showing verdure and trees that are evidently the results of cultivation. In the background looms a mountain peak, which is a symbol used again and again in Rosicrucianism and alchemy to represent the completion of the Great Work. That Work is finished when man masters the forms and forces of the mineral kingdom as completely as he masters the forms and forces of the vegetable and animal kingdoms. Nothing less than complete dominion is the objective.

That objective may be attained because what we now term subconsciousness is actually the substance of every form in all the kingdoms of nature below man. The Life Power, working at various levels or in various octaves of subconsciousness, *is all there is to anything that lies within the range of human experience*. Every single thing in the universe may be correctly described as a concourse of forces, temporarily presenting themselves as an object, by reason of the operation of laws of the Life Power working at subconscious levels.

Theoretically, then, it is perfectly reasonable to say that anyone who can modify the operation of subconsciousness at the point where he makes contact with it in his own personality may to some degree modify the forms that same operation takes in localities not so intimately connected with his personal life. Practical occultism rests on this theory *and verifies it by practice*. In brief, because you can control subconsciousness from the level of your self-conscious mental states, you may increase the extent of that control indefinitely. To this end the practical work of Rosicrucianism is directed.



## 2. THE EMPEROR

Key 4 (H)

The Universe is rational. It is composed according to a pattern intelligible to the mind of Man. That pattern may be seen, provided we train ourselves to look for it. Its characters are written on the mechanism of Nature, and we may read them.

From this it follows that nothing inherently unreasonable can possibly be an integral part of the cosmic order. What seems against reason is either false or else misunderstood. Whatever appears to contradict reason calls, therefore, for close examination. It must never be hastily rejected, since the appearance of unreason is frequently an appearance only, because of superficial observation. But

on whatever authority any statement purporting to be truth rests its claims, if it runs counter to established principles that have the support of reason, we ought to reject it, or at least refuse to let our actions be governed by it until evidence is forthcoming that does away with the appearance of unreason. This is a cardinal tenet of true Rosicrucianism.



## 3. THE HIEROPHANT

Key 5 (V)

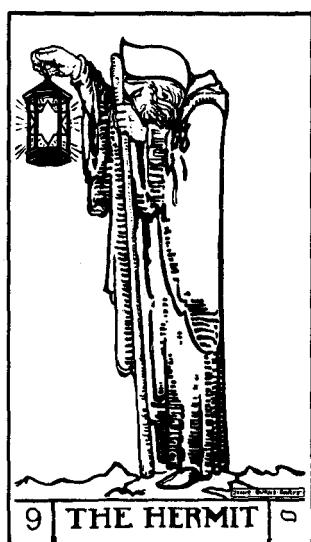
There are means of cognition beyond the ordinary forms of human experience. The Life Power immanent in every human personality can and does give that personality direct perceptions of reality transcending sense experience. These perceptions go beyond reasoning, but they are never contrary to reason. They provide us with correct solutions to particular problems, but every solution is also the revelation of an eternal principle.

The Hierophant was used in Chapter XII to illustrate one of the six truths taught to Zelators, but now another aspect of its meaning is emphasized.

It still assures us that there are means of cognition beyond the ordinary forms of experience. It tells us that the Life Power, or Christos, can communicate to every one of us direct perceptions of reality that go far beyond the limits of sensation. But its chief meaning in the

standing on the same level. In the natural man, subconsciousness, typified as feminine, is subordinate to self-consciousness. In the regenerated man, subconsciousness is released for a higher purpose and becomes the equal of her mate, self-consciousness. But of this we shall learn more in a higher Grade.

Four other doctrines of the Grade of Theoricus are related to the four letters of the word ISVD, *Yesod*, and to the Tarot Keys corresponding to those letters. They are the following:



#### 5. THE HERMIT Key 9 (I)

**The power that enables Man to contact the super-conscious levels when enlightenment comes is a form of energy derived from physical activities that are under the astrological domination of the sign Virgo.**

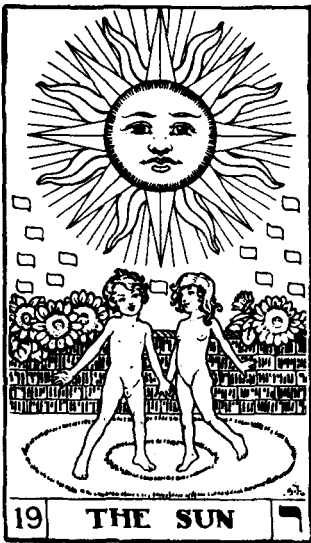
This is why the *Fama*, in speaking of the Brethren who established the Order, says: "They were all bachelors, of vowed virginity." On the surface this seems to be a reference to celibacy. Really it alludes to the occult fact that the actual physical energy that leads to illumination is drawn primarily from the assimilative functions of the intestines and organs connected with those functions, all ruled

by Virgo.

The Law of Response, represented by Key 9, is also involved in this. The mental attitude of intentional responsiveness or receptivity to the influx of the "Light from above" (represented by The Hermit's lantern) has a direct effect on subconscious processes controlling assimilation. What happens is that more solar energy is extracted from chyle, the Virgin's Milk of the alchemists. This additional energy cannot be received unless one is sincerely and wholly devoted to its right use. There is no way to evade this fundamental necessity. The psychic makeup of human beings is such that unless one devotedly intends to use this extra power correctly, he never gets it. The judge of the intention is by no means the personal consciousness of the aspirant but none other than the One Self, which can never be deceived. One may fool himself as to his motives for gaining occult powers, but nobody can fool the Self. Thus, none but those who are truly devoted ever find this power at their disposal.

Grade of Theoricus is to prevent the advancing pupil from supposing that reasoning is the only possible source of enlightenment.

The Hierophant is really identical with The Emperor, but he is a symbol of the Cosmic Reasoning beyond the levels at present attained by man. In the Qabalah the direct cognition this Key symbolizes is called the Triumphant and Eternal Intelligence—*Triumphant*, because it is a mode of consciousness that provides the “winning solution” to every problem; *Eternal*, because although the solutions are specific and adapted to every man’s particular needs, they invariably come to us as perceptions of universal principles. The perception of these eternal principles is beyond the present scope of our reasoning power. The principles themselves, however, are always consonant with, and never contradictory to, whatever we have been able to establish on a solid foundation of reason. They supplement and complete the understanding we gain by reasoning.



4. THE SUN  
Key 19 (R)

**Man is the synthesis of all cosmic activities. Human intelligence gathers together all the various threads of the Life Power’s self-manifestation and carries that manifestation beyond anything that could come into existence apart from Man and human intelligence.**

This doctrine is based on the Qabalistic meaning of the Hebrew letter Resh, to which is attributed the “Collective Intelligence.” It may also be noted that *Resh* means “the head, or face, of man,” and it is in the human head and countenance that the controlling elements of the Life Power are concentrated.

This fourth doctrine of the Grade of Theoricus has been paraphrased by Judge Troward in what he calls the doctrine of the Personal Factor.<sup>1</sup> It means that man has been brought into existence for a particular purpose. That purpose is to carry the Great Work to completion.

Man’s first share in the Great Work has to do with the regeneration of his own personality. Key 19 is a symbol of that regeneration. The two children in the picture are shown as being equal in age and stature and

<sup>1</sup>Thomas Troward, *The Creative Process in the Individual* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1915), 60-76. Used by permission.

heard. It is not the voice of conscience, in the ordinary meaning of that term, but something very much higher.

Many students of occultism keep their studies in a compartment of their minds that seems to be hermetically sealed from the rest of their lives. They think they are studying when they read occult books, attend classes and lectures, or sit in silence at set periods of the day. This is a grave mistake. Practical occultism makes use of books and lectures and classes, to be sure, but its really successful practitioners utilize it during all of their waking hours. More than this, they learn to carry it over into the time when the physical body is asleep. All this comes only by the most attentive practice.



8. THE EMPRESS  
Key 3 (D)

**Mental imagery is the door to the Higher Knowledge.**

This one sentence is a key to the whole occult theory. Remember that the Tarot picture used in this connection is that representing the planet Venus. Hence, it is connected with all the Venus and copper symbolism of the *Fama*. The reader will do well to devote days to developing his consciousness of the inner meaning of this sentence.

Such are the outlines of the occult theory developed in this Grade. When they are firmly fixed in mind, the advancing aspirant is ready to traverse two paths that lead still higher. Of these, one leads from *Yesod* to *Hod*, from the ninth circle to the eighth. This is the thirtieth path, attributed to the letter Resh and to Key 19 in Tarot.

Two other paths lead from the ninth circle. The first is the twenty-eighth path of *Tzaddi*, and the second is the twenty-fifth path of *Samekh*. Neither of these is open to the Theoricus.

His advancement to this Grade, however, entitles the Theoricus to traverse a path leading from the tenth circle to the eighth circle, which was not open to him while he was merely a Zelator. This is the path attributed to the letter Shin and connected with Key 20 of Tarot.



## 6. TEMPERANCE Key 14 (S)

Daily practice of the thought that the personal life is directly guided by a higher intelligence, daily remembrance of the truth that nobody can ever do anything of himself, daily endeavor to approach all circumstances and activities from this point of view are fundamental exercises in the Grade of Theoricus.

Little needs to be added to this, but the aspirant should consider carefully every detail of Key 14, which sums up symbolically what is stated here. The thought that one is under momentary guidance is one that the greater number of persons have to practice. It does not enter the mind spon-

taneously. Over and over again one must bring to mind the idea that one's personal activities are expressions of universal forces and laws. These practices include intense watchfulness and oft-repeated recollection.



## 7. THE HIEROPHANT Key 5 (V)

The subtlest and most important knowledge of the fundamental theory is not gained by reading nor by listening to the instruction of a human teacher. It is gained by listening with profound attention for the instruction of the Inner Voice. This listening is an active state of consciousness, a throwing of the whole personal consciousness into the form of expectant receptivity.

This intent listening can be practiced many times a day. It should be resorted to whenever one has to make a decision or solve a problem. What is required is the establishment of the habit of turning to the Inner Teacher for light on all daily needs of

this sort. The Voice that instructs us is a "still, small Voice," and we do not hear its counsel unless we listen for its message. So fixed are most persons in the delusion that they act of themselves that this inner monitor is seldom



## THE THIRTY-FIRST PATH

*The thirty-first path is called the Perpetual Intelligence. Why is it so called? Because it rules the movement of the sun and the moon according to their constitution, and causes each to gravitate in its respective orb.*

### *Book of Formation*

This is the path of Shin, called the "holy letter" because its number, 300, is that of the words RVCh ALHIM, *Ruach Elohim*, "The Life-breath of the Creative Powers." This Life-breath is what Hindus call *Prana*, the basic energy of the cosmos. It is fiery and electric in its nature, and therefore this path is associated by Qabalists with the element of fire. *The Book of Formation* says: "He caused the letter *Shin* to reign in fire."

This electric fire, the source of all activities in both the macrocosm and the microcosm, is a conscious energy. Its activity subsides, we are told, at the end of a particular cosmic cycle, but although it then passes from its active to its latent state, it does not cease to be. It is perpetual, eternal, without beginning or end. This is the reason for the designation "Perpetual Intelligence."

According to occult teaching illustrated by Key 20 of Tarot, this Perpetual Fiery Life-breath works not only on the plane of the three dimensions we know and within the limits of time that we are now able to grasp but also in a fourth dimension that is likewise an Eternal Now. This fourth dimension of the Life Power, according to Rosicrucian philosophy, now *Is*. Therefore, the Perpetual Intelligence is now an integral part of every human being.

We are not aware of it, but it is here in our lives, just the same. And even as mathematicians are being impressed with the necessity of taking this higher dimension into consideration, so must the aspirant to advancement on the Way of Return do all that he can to build up his conception of this aspect of his own nature. It may as yet have made almost no impression on his personal consciousness, but if he bears in mind the eighth doctrine of the Grade of Theoricus, he will learn how to become intensely aware of this important element of his makeup.

Tarot Key 20 was designed to help the aspirant build up this perception. In accordance with the biological law that subconsciousness builds organisms in response to desire and demand, the daily use of this picture will gradually build into the aspirant's brain the cells that must function before the experience the Key symbolizes can become a vivid, actual element of the seeker's personal consciousness.

The statement that this path rules the movement of the sun and moon is true in two ways. It is true in the macrocosm, because the currents of the cosmic Life-breath are the determiners of the motions of all heavenly bodies. The second application of this truth has to do with the microcosm and is taught in alchemical writings of the Western school of occultists, as well as in the Yoga philosophy of the Eastern school.

The currents of *Prana* are distinguished by the yogis as being solar and lunar, and these currents are actual forces at work within the vehicles of human personality. In alchemy these two are sometimes called gold and silver, and sometimes *our* sun and *our* moon. Furthermore, the sun center in the human body is the cardiac plexus, and the moon center is the pituitary body. When one knows that a current of the Life-breath flows between these two centers and regulates their activity, it is easy to understand why so many important occult practices have to do with the control of this current.

So far as readers of this work are concerned, the only safe practice is that which has to do with impressing subconsciousness with the pattern given in the symbolism of Key 20. Without any other technical practice whatever, daily use of this Key will begin subtle changes in the aspirant's organism. Eventually, these changes will make possible a firsthand experience of the higher state of consciousness termed the Perpetual Intelligence.

In addition to working with Key 20, one should often bring to mind the idea that fourth-dimensional existence is even now part of one's real makeup. Perhaps the simplest way to do this is to think of oneself as having eternal life here and now. The consequences of the repetition of this idea until subconsciousness takes hold of it and elaborates it are extraordinary. It is a seed idea whose fruit is complete release from three-dimensional limitations.

It must be understood that those who make contact with the true Rosicrucian Order will eventually receive more detailed and specific instruction than is to be found in these pages. But it is true as ever that newcomers are not admitted all at once to all our weighty secrets. What is set down here is the rule and pattern for beginners on the path, and here it may be said that the surest sign that one is just a beginner is the feeling that one is so very advanced that exercises like this one with Key 20 are dismissed as being too simple.

The simple truth is that precisely this kind of practice is used by members of the very highest Grades of the Invisible Order. No matter how far advanced one may be toward adeptship, the practice of symbolic mental imagery is a daily and indispensable mental exercise. Thus, the farther advanced one really is, the better does he understand the value of this practice and the reasons for its value. It is the mark of the tyro to underestimate the very things that are the chief treasures of the adept.

## THE THIRTIETH PATH

*The thirtieth path is called the Collective Intelligence, for thence astrologers, by the judgment of the stars and the heavenly signs, derive their speculations and the perfection of their science according to the motions of the stars.*

*Book of Formation*

It is because man is a synthesis of the cosmic forces, a summary of the powers of the One Life, that any science is possible, and particularly true astrology. The meaning of life is wrapped up in man, the microcosm. This is by no means the idea that the universe was made for man. It is the doctrine that man came into existence for the completion of the Great Work in which the One Life is engaged.

By right judgment of the movement of the stars, certain basic patterns are revealed. The orbits of the planets have relations to each other that are also the relations of musical tones, the relations revealed by the crystallization of minerals, the relations developed in the production of all forms.

Man is the only being on earth who can recognize these patterns and apply them consciously. Astrology, essentially a mathematical and geometrical science, is brought to perfection when these key patterns are perceived. This science, by no means perfect as now practiced, has within it the germ of a great development. The key to that development is the fact that human life is the expression of the same forces and laws that are manifested in the visible changes of position and relationship written in the language of the stars.

Until man perceives and applies these patterns, he is a slave of the forces whose ebb and flow are indicated by the stars. When he knows and uses these patterns, he shares consciously in the reign of cosmic law. Apart from this knowledge, astrology leads to an arid, sterile fatalism. Perfected by this knowledge, the same science adds immeasurably to the richness and resources of human personality. This may be one of the reasons that the pair of opposites, "Fruitfulness and Sterility," are among the various attributions of the letter Resh.

These two paths lead from the Grades of Zelator and Theoricus to the next Grade. The thirty-first path begins in the Grade of Zelator because it is an elaboration of the six doctrines of that Grade. Hence, Key 19 should be considered with special reference to those doctrines, which shed much light on the inner meaning of its symbols. Furthermore, what is represented by Key 19 demands the refinement of physical sensation that is a main object of the work of the Zelator.

The thirtieth path begins in the Grade of Theoricus, because in traversing it one has continually to return to the underlying elements of the theory taught in the second Grade. The idea that human life is a synthesis of the whole range of cosmic powers is, for persons below the highest Grades of the Invisible Order, as yet little more than theory, and in traversing the thirtieth path one elaborates and rounds out that theory.